



## An open letter to the residents of Senate District 10

*Friends,*

I know it feels like the legislature was just in session, but it's almost time for us to reconvene to take up the important issues facing our state, such as public education, transportation and water infrastructure, and public safety. As many of you already know, the Texas Legislature meets every odd-numbered year for 140 days to introduce, debate, and pass legislation. The most important item we consider, and the only action we are required to take by the Texas Constitution, is the state biennial budget. Each session, we must budget for two years at a time, which is an immense challenge for a state as large and robust as Texas.

Since I entered the Senate in 2015, I have been involved in the creation and passage of the last two state budgets. We constrained the growth of state spending to the rate of growth in population and inflation—the gold standard for fiscal discipline. Even with limiting the growth in spending, we appropriated an additional \$4 billion to public education, dedicated over \$5 billion to new, non-tolled road projects, added over \$1.5 billion to state border security operations, invested over \$500 million into an overhaul of Child Protective Services, and much more.

I am proud of what we were able to achieve for Texas without raising taxes. In fact, we cut business taxes by over \$2.5 billion and increased the homestead exemption to provide some relief from skyrocketing local property taxes. We also preserved the state's savings account, which has a balance of over \$10 billion. In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and its historic destruction, having those funds in savings will prove to be of immense significance.



As we return in 2019, the budget process is projected to be difficult. I will continue to defend you, the taxpayer, and ensure that your state government is a good steward of your hard-earned dollars. Passing a budget that properly funds core functions of state government is my focus, and I will continue to do that with the seriousness this task requires.

In Liberty,

Konni Burton

KONNIBURTON  
THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE



## LEGISLATIVE LOOK AHEAD: THE BIG ISSUES

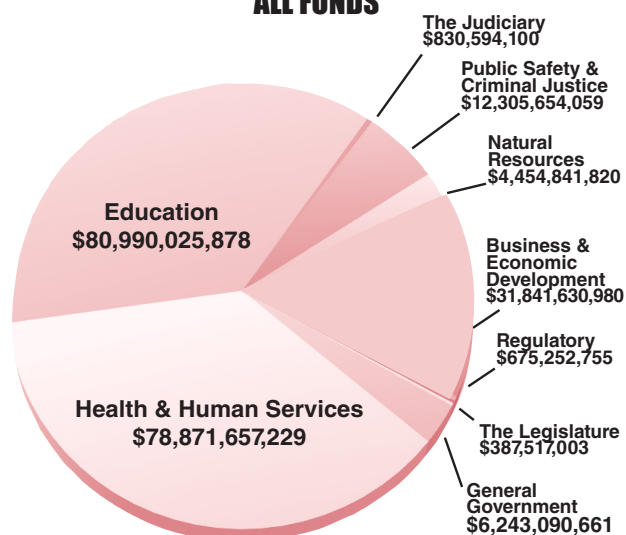
### PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND REFORM

Across Texas in the ten-year period from 2006 to 2016, city property taxes increased over 72%, county taxes nearly 70%, schools nearly 43%, and special purpose districts well over 100%. This trend is completely unsustainable. As a fellow property owner, I understand the impact of ever-increasing property taxes on a household budget. Texas continually ranks as one of the worst states in the nation when it comes to our local property tax burden, and it is crushing home and business owners alike. It is well past time for serious action to be taken to slow down the growth of property taxes.

#### Summary of Conference Committee Report

HOUSE BILL 1, 2018-19 BIENNIUM

##### ALL FUNDS



I am encouraged that Governor Greg Abbott has introduced a serious reform plan in advance of the legislative session. His plan is similar to the plan I coauthored last session that passed out of the Texas Senate, but unfortunately died in the other chamber. That legislation would have required a direct vote of the people if any local taxing entity attempted to grow its budget by more than 4%. Governor

Abbott's plan calls for a vote of the people after budget growth of 2.5%.

Let's debate the percentage of growth allowed before a vote of the people, but let's not debate whether the people deserve a vote. There's no doubt that the current system has failed Texans, and it is time to give the people a voice. As your State Senator, I trust you to make the best decision for your community and your household budget when it comes to your local property taxes.

### SCHOOL FINANCE COMMISSION & TEACHER PAY

Last session, the legislature created a commission to study and make substantive recommendations for improving the funding system of our public schools. This commission comprises members of the legislature, school employees, and the general public. Their findings will be exhaustively reviewed and intensely discussed next session.

My top priority in any future overhaul of our finance system will be to quickly phase out the "Robin Hood" system entirely. This scheme, which was introduced in 1993 by Democrat Governor Ann Richards, has never solved the problems

*If you or your family  
members are interested in  
visiting the Texas Capitol,  
or if you have a child  
interested in serving as an  
Honorary Senate Page  
for the Texas Senate.  
Please contact Senator  
Burton's Capitol Office  
for more information.*







## LEGISLATIVE LOOK AHEAD: KONNI'S ISSUES



*Senator Burton presides over the Senate Chamber.*

we have with school funding and has only exacerbated them. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research concluded that “Robin Hood” destroys property wealth (~\$27,000 per pupil) at a far greater magnitude than it reduces the spending gap between property-rich and property-poor school districts (only \$500 per pupil). Only a government scheme could produce such terrifyingly counterproductive results.

“Robin Hood” is a significant piece of our broken system of school finance and phasing it out will be no small task for legislators. During the impending debate, I will be guided by two unwavering principles you can always count on: I will never support a state income tax and I want to reduce our reliability on property taxes.

During the special session in Summer 2017, I introduced a constitutional amendment to dedicate half of the revenues generated by the Texas lottery to be used for teacher salary increases and

bonuses for teachers with at least six years of service. Teachers are the key to our education system, and we must do more to both attract great teachers and retain the ones we have. I want to see any new school finance system prioritize teacher pay as one of its foundational points.

### **GRAPPLING WITH OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FAILURES AT OUR BORDER**

I grew up in the small, rural south Texas town of Banquete. I truly understand the unique culture and dynamics of Texas as a border state. It is yet another reason Texas is such an amazing place to live and raise a family. However, our federal government is failing to secure our southern border and is failing even more to produce a rational system of immigration into our country. Border states like Texas are suffering the most from this ineptitude.

Because of the federal government failing to fulfill its duty, the State of Texas must grapple with numerous, serious challenges, especially drug and human trafficking.





## LEGISLATIVE LOOK AHEAD: KONNI'S ISSUES

Since entering office, I was proud to have led the charge in demanding more money for state border security operations. The legislature has added over \$1.5 billion to that effort in the last four years—the largest such appropriation for these pivotal operations in our history.

Last session, we also banned so-called “Sanctuary City” policies, which are rules or procedures at the local-level (city or county) which prohibit or undermine the enforcement of our federal immigration laws. We must partner with the federal government when appropriate, not work against them.

Your state government has a constitutional duty to protect you and your fellow citizens and although it's been nearly seventeen years since the horrific 9/11 terrorist attack, I have not forgotten the horror of that day. We must stay vigilant and make sure that those who want to harm Texans and Americans do not come in through our Southern Border. I will not accept the federal government's failures on border security and immigration, and I will do everything in my power as your State Senator to protect Texans.



*Senator Burton in the Criminal Justice Committee.*



*Senator Burton as vice-chair of the Administration Committee.*

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Criminal Justice reform has become a favorite policy interest of mine because it is an area of state law where Republicans and Democrats come together and work toward common goals. As a leading voice on this issue, I enjoy helping my colleagues understand the balance between necessary law and order and restorative justice which benefits our society. With major prison reforms recently passing the U.S. Congress (largely based on the work we have already done in Texas), the time is now for more progress on this critical issue.

As many of you know, one of my highest legislative priorities is requiring a criminal conviction before the government can take away your property. Currently, the government may seize, and eventually keep, your property if it believes the property was used in the commission of a crime or was gained through criminal activity—without even charging you with a crime! In my opinion, this practice of “civil asset forfeiture” goes against everything we value in Texas: freedom, liberty, and property, and it must be abolished. Our police should have tools to catch criminals, but I am not willing to sacrifice our Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights to do so. There must be balance, and we can get there.





# KONNI BURTON'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

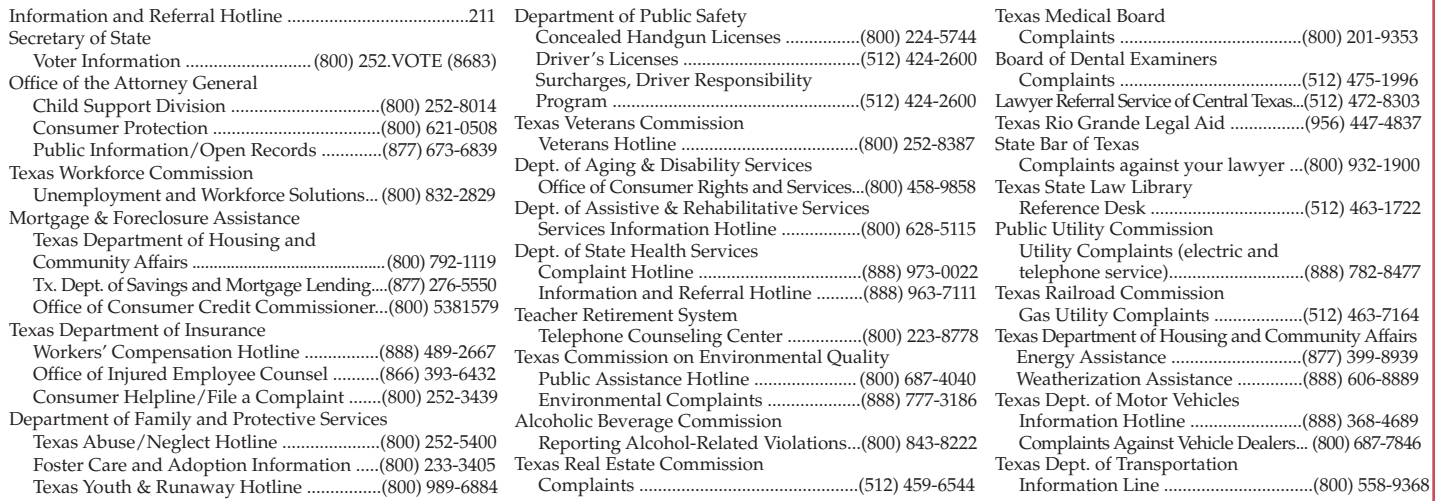
- Reducing the out-of-control local property tax burden on home and business owners.
- Prioritizing the funding of core functions of state government—public education, transportation and water infrastructure, and public safety.
- Protecting the constitutional rights of the people from government overreach, such as the foundational right to life, the right to own and keep property, the right to bear arms, and the right to be secure from unreasonable search and seizure.
- Eliminating onerous regulations that stifle growth and innovation in the private sector.
- Fighting the enormous growth in the cost of pursuing a college education.
- Ensuring our system of criminal justice produces the best outcomes for victims of crime and our society.



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## ABOUT SENATOR KONNI BURTON



Birthplace: Kerrville, Texas

Education: University of North Texas, B.B.A. Marketing

Committees: Administration (Vice Chairman), Criminal Justice, Natural Resources & Economic Development, Health & Human Services

Senator Konni Burton is a wife, mom, and lifelong Christian.

After being born in Kerrville, Konni was raised in the small South Texas town of Banquete, which consisted of little more than a school and a post office. Both her parents worked at the school: her father as the high school principal and her mother as the school secretary. Konni attended the University of North Texas, earning a B.B.A. in Marketing. There she met her husband, Phillip, of thirty-four years.

A strong pro-life advocate, Konni and Phil have worked closely with The Gladney Center for Adoption in Fort Worth since adopting their now adult daughters, Tori and Faith. In 2014, Konni won her first bid for elected office by becoming the state senator for District 10. Burton champions limited government, personal liberties, and free market economics.

Konni and her family live in Colleyville.